



OUTREACH

NASA Helps Recreate Amelia Earhart Flight

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On March 17, 1937, Amelia Earhart took off from the Oakland, California, airport in an attempt to become the first pilot—male or female—to circumnavigate the globe at its longest point, around the equator. She never finished the trip. Her plane was lost at sea on July 2, 1937. On March 17, 1997, the 60th anniversary of Ms. Earhart's departure, pilot Linda Finch of San Antonio, Texas, will attempt to recreate and complete Earhart's historic expedition.

World Flight 1997

Called World Flight 1997, Finch's journey, spanning five continents and making more than 30 stops in 20 countries, will closely replicate Earhart's route. The flight is expected to take two and a half months.

Although World Flight 1997 is not the first attempt to recreate Earhart's flight, it is the first to do so using the same make and model aircraft—a Lockheed Electra 10E—with only a pilot and navigator at the controls. Of the 15 aircraft originally produced, only two now exist. Finch's is the only one currently airwor-

thy. Using original drawings and photographs, the 1935 aircraft has been meticulously and accurately restored—right down to its rivets—to replicate Earhart's Electra.

World Flight 1997, sponsored by Pratt & Whitney (United Technologies Corporation), is a "learning by doing" activity of the interactive education program, "You Can Soar," which is available to US educators, grades 5-8. This program includes a World Wide Web site <www.worldflight.org/youcansoar/> coordinated with a multi-disciplinary teacher's package, and offers a documentary video called "Heroines of the Sky." Partners for You Can Soar include Stennis Space Center (SSC), Pratt & Whitney, COMSAT Mobile Communications, the US Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command, and the Ninety-Nines, an organization for the advancement of women pilots. Amelia Earhart was instrumental in the formation of the Ninety-Nines.

In support of World Flight 1997, SSC is producing a geo-map CD-ROM that will allow students in their classrooms to track Finch's

flight. The Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command at SSC, led by Rear Admiral Paul Gaffney II, will help with weather navigation during the flight. Additionally, the National Geographic Society will have a writer and photographer follow and document Finch during parts of her flight. The Society plans to publish "Sky Pioneer," a book for young audiences about Earhart, with a forward by Finch.

Tribute to Earhart

In recreating Earhart's flight, Finch stated that she is not out to set any records. She is doing it instead as a tribute to Earhart's vision and spirit, and the sharing of a message that is as timeless today as it was more than half a century ago. The heart of the project is its outreach to inner city and at-risk youth with Earhart's message about reaching above and beyond limitations.

"Amelia believed that limits were often more perceived than real, and those imposed by society, friends, and fears can be overcome," Finch said. "She thought that if you have faith in yourself, anything is possible and you can accomplish your dreams."

Since the launch of the project last August, Finch has been meeting with school children around the country, inviting them to "fly

along" with her by viewing the World Flight and You Can Soar Web sites. During her flight, route maps with real-time tracking, combined with messages from Finch and her navigator, will be transmitted daily at these sites, allowing students and people around the world to be a part of the expedition. As she re-creates Earhart's flight, Finch will be stopping at designated airports to meet with students who will be able to see the electra and ask questions.

World Flight 1997 introduces a new generation to the spirit of Amelia Earhart and Linda Finch, along with NASA and the other partners of the You Can Soar education program are making it happen. A complete copy of the You Can Soar World Flight 97 brochure being distributed to schools is available for viewing on NASA's Tri-State Education Initiative Web site at:

[http://192.149.120/
flight.htm](http://192.149.120/flight.htm)

For Further information and to track Finch's flight, access the World Flight 97 Web site at:

<http://worldflight.org>